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THE "PROTOCOLS" BOLSHEVISM AND THE JEWS

An Address
to Their Fellow-Citizens by
American Jewish Organizations

Published December 1, 1920

NEW YORK
THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE
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A national organization instituted in 1906 and incorporated by an act of the New York State Legislature in 1911, "to prevent the infraction of the civil and religious rights of Jews in all parts of the world; to render all lawful assistance and to take appropriate remedial action in the event of threatened or actual invasion or restriction of such rights, or of unfavorable discrimination with respect thereto; to secure for Jews equality of economic, social and educational opportunity; to alleviate the consequences of persecution and to afford relief from calamities affecting Jews wherever they may occur."

THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

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TO OUR FELLOW CITIZENS:

During the war, by secret agencies, a document variously called "The Procotols of the Elders of Zion," "The Protocols of the Meetings of the Zionist Men of Wisdom," and "The Protocols of the Wise Men of Zion," was clandestinely circulated, in typewritten form, among public officials and carefully selected civilians, for the purpose of giving rise to the belief that the Jews, in conjunction with Freemasons, had been for centuries engaged in a conspiracy to produce revolution and anarchy, by means of which they hoped to attain the control of the world by the establishment of some sort of despotic rule. Some months ago this document was published in England. More recently it has appeared in print in the United States and thousands of copies have been circulated with an air of mystery among legislators, journalists, clergymen and teachers, members of clubs, and indiscriminately to the general public. The London *Morning Post* has given out a series of articles as a commentary upon The Protocols, in which the charge of an unholy conspiracy between Jews and Freemasons is elaborated, and Bolshevism is characterized as a movement of, for and by the Jews and is declared to be a fulfilment of The Protocols. These articles, whose authorship is not disclosed, have now appeared in book form under the title "The Cause of World Unrest." During the past six months there have been sent forth weekly in Henry Ford's organ, *The Dearborn Independent*, attacks of extraordinary virulence upon the Jews. These assaults upon the honor of the Jewish people are all founded on The Protocols and on the discredited

literature of Russian and German anti-Semitism, inspired by the minions of autocracy. Parrot-like they repeat the abominable charges that can only appeal to the credulity of a stunted intelligence—charges long since conceded to be unfounded by all fair-minded men. Ford is employing his great wealth in scattering broadcast his fulminations, regardless of consequences.

When the Jews of the United States first learned of these malevolent prints, they deemed it beneath their dignity to take notice of them because they regarded them as a mere recrudescence of mediaeval bigotry and stupidity showing upon their face their utter worthlessness. These publications have, however, been put in circulation to such an extent that it is believed that the time has come, humiliating though it be to them, for the Jews to make answer to these libels and to the unworthy insinuations and innuendoes that have been whispered against them.

Speaking as representatives of the Jewish people, familiar with the history of Judaism in its various phases and with the movements, past and present, in Jewish life, we say with all solemnity:

(1) The Protocols are a base forgery. There has never been an organization of Jews known as The Elders of Zion, or The Zionist Men of Wisdom, or The Wise Men of Zion, or bearing any other similar name. There has never existed a secret or other Jewish body organized for any purpose such as that implied in The Protocols. The Jewish people have never dreamed of a Jewish dictatorship, of a destruction of religion, of an interference with industrial prosperity, or of an overthrow of civilization. The Jews have never conspired with the Freemasons, or with any other body, for any purpose.

From the time of the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem by Titus, the Jews have had no political state. For centuries they were forced to wander from land to land, to flee for refuge wherever they might find it against bitter persecution. They were pent up in ghettoes, were deprived of even the shadow of civil or political rights, and were made the objects of every possible form of discrimination. It is little more than fifty years since the Jews of Western Europe became politically emancipated. Until the outbreak of the World War the Jews of Eastern Europe, constituting a majority of all the Jews of the world, were not even permitted to exercise the rights of citizenship in lands where they and their ancestors had dwelt for generations. The great mass of the Jews were hampered in every way in their efforts to earn a livelihood. Far from desiring to govern the world, they were content with the opportunity to live. Numerically they constitute less than one per cent. of the population of the earth; and more than one-half of them are on the verge of starvation. The suggestion that, in their feebleness, they have been planning in secret conclave to seize absolute power and to dominate the ninety-nine per cent. of non-Jews upon the globe is a ridiculous invention than which even madness can conjure nothing more preposterous.

Where is the habitat of these so-called Elders of Zion, by whatever name they may be called? Who are these hidden sages? Whence do they come? What is the nature of their organization? The distributors of The Protocols are silent on that subject. Whence come these pretended Protocols? There have been various versions. One Serge Nilus, of whose identity little is known, a Russian mystic and an ardent

supporter of Czarism, claims to have received them in Russia, in 1901, in manuscript form, from a Russian office-holder, who stated that the manuscript had been originally obtained by a lady, whose name is not given, and who, he said, obtained them in a mysterious way. In what language they were written is not stated. Where that manuscript now is does not appear. Nilus asserts that he submitted The Protocols to one of the Russian Grand Dukes, who, after examination, returned them with the despairing message: "Too late." Apparently there was no room for them in the Russian archives, and they suggested no task for the Czar's ubiquitous police to perform. In 1905, Nilus published at Tsarskoje Selo a second edition of a mystical book entitled "The Great in the Little," the first edition having been published in 1901. Into this later edition he incorporated for the first time The Protocols, which he claimed to have had in his possession for four years. In January, 1917, he published another book under the title "It is Near, at the Door," purporting to foretell "the coming of the Anti-Christ and the Kingdom of the Devil on Earth." In this book he announces that he had only then learned authoritatively from Jewish sources (what they were is not explained) that these Protocols were nothing other than a strategic plan for the conquest of the world, of putting it under the yoke of Israel, "the struggler-against-God," a plan worked out by the leaders of the Jewish people during the many centuries of their dispersion, and finally presented to the Council of Elders by the Prince of Exile, Theodor Herzl, at the time of the first Zionist Congress summoned by him at Basle in August, 1897. He declared that

The Protocols were signed by the Zionist representatives of the thirty-third degree of initiation; that they were secretly removed from the complete file of Protocols that pertained to the first Zionist Congress; that they were taken from the secret vaults at the main Zionist office, which, it is said, "at present is located in French territory."

The Protocols as published bear no signatures. The identity of the Zionist representatives by whom they are claimed to have been signed is left untold. The location of the main Zionist office and of the secret vaults from which The Protocols were secretly removed remains a secret. It is, however, a matter of history that the first Zionist Congress was publicly held by Jews who came from various parts of Europe for the purpose of considering the misery of their brethren in Eastern Europe and of enabling them to find shelter in the Holy Land. Theodor Herzl was a distinguished journalist, a man of true nobility of character. He presided at the Congress, all of whose deliberations were held in the light of day. The insinuation that there was a thirty-third, or any other, degree of initiation in this organization is merely a malicious effort to bring the Jews into parallelism with the Freemasons and thus to subject them to all the fanciful and fantastic charges that have from time to time been laid at the door of Freemasonry, oblivious of the fact that fifteen Presidents of the United States, including Washington, and many of the leading statesmen of Europe and America, have been members of that order.

Nilus and his associates belonged to the Russian bureaucracy. In 1905, through the Black Hundreds, that body sought in every way to crush the Jews and to prevent the liberalization of the government. The time

was propitious for the perpetration of a political forgery by a government that habitually resorted to the employment of *agents provocateurs*, a government which only a few years later, against the protest of the enlightened clergy of the world, ineffectually sought to convict Mendel Beilis on the charge of ritual murder. It is significant that one of his prosecutors has been active in distributing manuscript copies of The Protocols throughout the United States.

Irrespective of this history, bristling with suspicion, an analysis of The Protocols shows that on their face they are a fabrication and that they must have emanated from the bitter opponents of democracy. They are replete with cynical references to the French Revolution, and to the conceptions of liberty, equality and fraternity. They uphold privilege and autocracy. They belittle education. They condemn religious liberty. They assert that political freedom is an idea and not a fact, and that the doctrine that a government is nothing but a steward of the people is a mere phrase. These are the very doctrines that one would expect from the protagonists of autocracy. Nothing can be more foreign to Jewish thought and aspiration than these brutal theories of reaction. That the Jews, whose very life has been a prayer for the blessings of liberty and equality, should hold them in contempt is unthinkable.

The document throughout is farcical in its absurdities. In the Russian original there is a passage, significantly omitted from the translation, to the effect that the English are the descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel and the British Government is violently attacked for its liberalism. If climax there be to all this folly, it lies in the idea set forth in The Protocols that "the world

ruler is to spring from the dynastic roots of King David" and that "the King of Israel will become the real Pope of the Universe and the Patriarch of the International Church," whatever that may mean.

It is needless, however, to elaborate, when one considers that the editor of the London *Morning Post*, in his introduction to "The Cause of the World Unrest," himself doubts the genuineness of The Protocols, and that the anonymous author of that book, after using them as his text, is unable to give them any higher certificate than that they may or may not be genuine. Indeed, he goes so far as to say:

"We have said that this document flashes a blaze of light, and so it does, but whether this document is genuine or not, whether the blaze of light is true or false, can only be judged by internal evidence and probabilities. We may say at once that Nilus advances nothing in the nature of real evidence to prove the document, and that his account of how it came into his hands consists of assertion only, without evidence to support it."

And yet a document, thus discredited by its sponsors, is made the basis of an indictment against an entire people.

(2) The contention that the genuineness of The Protocols is established by the outbreak of Bolshevism in Russia twelve years after their publication, and that Bolshevism is a Jewish movement, is absurd in theory and absolutely untrue in fact. As well might it be said that a forged deed is genuine because twenty years after its date a relative of the person whose name is forged is falsely charged with being a disturber of the peace.

To say that the Jews are responsible for Bolshevism is a deliberate falsehood. The originators of Bolshevism were exclusively

non-Jews. While it is true that there are Jews among the Bolshevists, notably Trotsky, they represent a small fraction of the Jews and of the followers of Bolshevism. Lenine, who belonged to the Russian aristocracy and has not a drop of Jewish blood in his veins, was the creator as he has been the motive power of the Soviets. Tchicherin, who has conducted their foreign affairs, Bucharin, Krassin and Kalinin, all non-Jews, are, with Lenine, the brains of the Communist Party.

The Bolshevist cabinet, known as the People's Commissars, consists of twenty members, of whom Trotsky and Sverdlov are the only Jews, and they are Jews merely by birth. Of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, including Trotsky, there are four Jews out of thirteen. The so-called Extraordinary Commission, whose function it is to suppress opposition to the Bolshevist regime from within, is directed by a triumvirate consisting of a Pole and two Letts, none of whom is of Jewish origin. Although Trotsky is the head of the War Department, his General Staff is composed exclusively of non-Jews.

In "The Cause of World Unrest" a list of fifty names is given, most of whom are classified as Jews and Bolshevists, in order to establish the thesis that "nearly all of the Bolshevist leaders are Jews." An examination of the list shows that ten of the Jews included in the list are the leaders of the anti-Bolshevist movement in Russia; that a number of those who are classified in the list as Jews are not Jews at all; that a large proportion of those classified as Jews are men who are so obscure and hold positions so inconspicuous that whether or not they are Jews is not only uncertain but unimportant. They are certainly not leaders.

On the other hand, the leaders of the Mensheviki, who are the sworn foes of Bolshevism, are to a large extent Jews. Among the chiefs of the Constitutional Democratic Party of Russia, who are strongly opposed to the Soviets, are Vinaver, Sliosberg, Pasmanik, Kaminka, Landau and Friedman, all prominent Jews. Among the leaders of the People's Socialist, the Socialist Revolutionary, and the Menshevik section of the Social Democratic parties, bitter opponents of the Bolsheviks, are a large number of Jews. The leading anti-Bolshevist newspapers, which of necessity are published outside of Russia, have Jews upon their editorial staffs. An overwhelming majority of Russian Jews have been ruined by the coercive measures of the Soviets. They have submitted to the confiscation of their property and are undergoing unspeakable hardships. The Orthodox Jews, whose numbers preponderate, remaining loyal to the faith of their fathers, regard the Bolsheviks as the enemies of all religion, and, therefore, hold the doctrines of Bolshevism in abhorrence. With comparatively few exceptions the Jews are looked upon by the Bolsheviks as belonging to the hated bourgeoisie and as favoring capitalism. The Zionists, who constitute a numerous and important element of the Jews of Russia, have been denounced by the Soviets as counter-revolutionary, and many of them have been cast into prison and threatened with death—Zionists, we repeat, who are the followers of Herzl.

If the Jews are to be condemned because of a Trotsky, who has never in the slightest degree concerned himself with Judaism or the welfare of the Jews, then there is not a people that has ever lived that might not with equal right be condemned because in

its membership there were men who are alleged to have advocated hateful doctrines. The Jew has traditionally stood for religion, law, order, the family, and the right of property. It is, therefore, the height of cruelty to charge him with responsibility for Bolshevism, when its doctrines, should they prevail, would inevitably lead to the destruction of Judaism. It is especially a brutal charge when one considers all that the Jew has suffered from the oppressive and discriminatory laws of Russian autocracy and from its effort to suppress every aspiration that the Jew had for freedom. It is a great tribute to the patriotism of the Russian Jews that, in spite of the indignities that they had to undergo, hundreds of thousands of them fought under the banner of the Czar, loyally and gallantly, and in large numbers laid down their lives in the Allied cause. The rosters of the army and navy of the United States contain the names of tens of thousands of Jews born in Russia who served so faithfully under our colors that they gained the unqualified approval of their officers, and proportionately many of them were awarded decorations of honor by a grateful country.

We have refrained from commenting on the libels contained in *The Dearborn Independent.* Ford, in the fulness of his knowledge, unqualifiedly declares The Protocols to be genuine and argues that practically every Jew is a Bolshevist. We have dealt sufficiently with both of these falsehoods. It is useless in a serious document to analyze the puerile and venomous drivel that he has derived from the concoctions of professional agitators. He is merely a dupe.

What is the motive of those who have set in motion this new onslaught of anti-Semitism? It is the motive that again and

again has actuated autocracy and its adroit supporters—that of seeking a scapegoat for their own sins, so that they may be enabled under the cover of a false issue to deceive the public.

It is an attempt to drive into the solidarity of the citizenry of our country that has been its pride and its strength the wedge of discord, by arousing suspicion and inciting overt acts not only against those of Jewish origin but also against Freemasons, in the hope of discrediting free government in the eyes of the European masses and thus facilitate the restoration of absolutism in government.

The Protocols were manufactured in Russia under the bureaucracy, and the ammunition with which the campaign is conducted has been furnished out of the arsenal of imperialistic Germany and by those who are seeking to restore the Hapsburgs, the Hohenzollerns, and the Romanoffs on their former thrones. Ancient hatred and unreasoning prejudice and a failure to understand and know what the Jew really is, are likewise responsible for the readiness with which these falsehoods have been accepted by those who are ever willing to believe evil of their fellow-men.

We have an abiding confidence in the spirit of justice and fairness that permeates the true American, and we are satisfied that our fellow-citizens will not permit the campaign of slander and libel that has been launched against us to go unreproved. There is enough for all of us to do in the great task of building up our common country and of developing the principles on which it is founded. Let not hatred and misunderstanding arise where peace and harmony, unity and brotherliness, are required to perpetuate all that America rep-

resents and to enable all men to know that within her wide boundaries there is no room for injustice and intolerance.

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